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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MK](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: GREECE/MACEDONIA: PM KARAMANLIS REITERATES VETO  
IF NO SOLUTION

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

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SUMMARY  
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11. (U) In response to Parliamentary Questions, PM Karamanlis publicly reiterated that Greece will block a NATO invitation to Macedonia absent a name agreement, while reiterating desire to reach agreement. Greek opposition parties have loudly criticized any "dual name" solution, favoring a change in Macedonia's constitutional name. Weekend press dissected the leaked Nimetz proposal, with most commentators focusing on flaws. Meanwhile two polls were published that show strong opposition to any "dual name" and strong support for a Greek veto of a NATO invitation to Macedonia. Finally, UN envoy Nimetz told influential "Kathimerini" that he will be "objective" and "even handed" and plans another round of talks soon in New York. End Summary.

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Karamanlis to Parliament -- Veto If No Solution  
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12. (U) The PM's question time with Parliament on 2/22 became heated as opposition MPs challenged GOG policy on Macedonia. In response to criticisms against the GOG's policies, Karamanlis responded that "no solution means no invitation" for Macedonia. Karamanlis added that Macedonia's NATO and EU aspirations depend on "proof" Macedonia can be "a real ally and partner." This means it must "arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the outstanding issues regarding its name."

13. (U) Opposition PASOK President Papandreou also criticized the leak of the Nimetz plan to the Greek press. FM Bakoyannis had previously publicly announced that she assumed "political responsibility" for the leak, and we understand that the MFA is doing a robust leak investigation. Karamanlis noted that the leak had "does not help," and reminded Papandreou that when he had been Foreign Minister there had also been a number of leaks of sensitive documents.

14. (U) Meanwhile, FM Bakoyannis has continued to take the high road in public comments, telling reporters that Greece seeks a solution "based on consensus, reality, and national dignity" on both sides. At a swearing-in ceremony for new conscripts, DefMin Meimarakis stressed that Greece will seek a solution through "dialogue and peaceful resolution of problems," but Greece will not accept any "threats against territorial integrity" or any "affronts to national principles." The ruling party Governor of Thessaloniki told reporters, "Macedonia cannot be bargained away or sold."

Veto!" Finally, Metropolitan of Thessaloniki Anthimos called from the pulpit 2/24 for popular demonstrations against a dual name solution and for the government to veto Macedonia's accession into NATO and the EU; although not responding directly, new Archbishop Ieronymos reiterated that he wanted no role in "public debate on foreign affairs."

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Opposition Criticism  
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¶5. (U) Greece's opposition parties have, uniformly, criticized government handling of the issue:

-- PASOK: In an exclusive interview in influential "Ta Nea," Papandreou said PASOK opposes any "double name solution," and he criticized the government for agreeing to negotiate on that basis.

-- Greece's communist party (KKE) leadership have also accused the government of "lying about a veto" on the name issue, while leftist party SYN President Alexis Tsipras has called for a composite name with a geographic reference.

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Press Commentary -- Nimetz Proposal Flawed  
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¶6. (SBU) The Nimetz proposal was the overwhelming favorite subject of Greece's op-ed and editorial writers over the weekend. Those focused on the proposal itself noted its flaws, including the absence of a requirement for Skopje to amend its constitutional name and the inclusion in the proposal of names that do not contain geographic modifiers. Weekend press also speculated about friction between PM Karamanlis and FM Bakoyannis on the issue and examined a

ATHENS 00000258 002 OF 002

non-paper circulated by the MFA to MPs. (Note: Although it would not be surprising if there were Karamanlis/Bakoyannis frictions on the name issue, we continue to see indications that FM Bakoyannis is consulting very closely with PM Karamanlis on all aspects of this issue. End Note).

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Polls: No Dual Name and No NATO Invite  
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¶7. (U) On Sunday, two separate polls were published on the issue. In one poll:

-- 70.4 percent of respondents rejected use of the term "Macedonia" in any new name for Macedonia; and

-- 66.6 percent rejected a double name solution.

In the other poll:

-- 59.3 percent of respondents said Greece should veto Macedonia joining NATO If the United States pressured Greece to accept the latest Nimetz proposal; and

-- Only 5.3 percent said Greece should accept the Nimetz proposal.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: Although polling is well-developed in Greece, we cannot be certain that these polls were methodologically sound, and we note that some of the questions were drafted in a leading manner. However these polls, and others showing similar results in the past, have now become part of the public dialogue on the Macedonia name issue. End Comment.

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Nimetz Pledges Fairness/More Talks  
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19. (U) Finally, "Kathimerini" ran on Sunday an interview with Nimetz that has received wide coverage. Nimetz noted that he will be "objective and even-handed" with both sides. He added that he plans to call a new round of talks in New York "very soon" once the two sides have sent "official word" that they have completed their review of his proposal and are ready to provide a detailed response.  
SPECKHARD